

Workshop 6 – Political and Social Negotiation Processes/Sustainability and the Politics of Water

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Title: Use of a methodology to support the design of a Multi-Stakeholder Platform in the case of a water and sanitation project in Tiquipaya (Bolivia)

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Presentation of the topic and analysis of the issue:

Tiquipaya is a Municipality situated in the peri-urban zone of Cochabamba city, Bolivia. Nowadays, drinking water is distributed by community-based Water Committees and just a small part of the population has a sewage system. In this situation Tiquipaya and the nearby Colcapirhua Municipality decided to implement a joint water and sanitation project, called MACOTI. The critics of many Water Committees to this project led to a series of conflicts in 2003.

In June 2004, the Vice-Ministry of Basic Services, proposed to organize a Technical Table (TT) in Tiquipaya to undertake an in-depth review of the project with the stakeholders and achieve a negotiated agreement. This document describes the implementation of this platform. It followed a Generic Methodology for design and evaluation of MSPs elaborated by Negowat Project; the Facilitator of this process.

Presentation of the results:

Baseline analysis

Tiquipaya was split apart between groups supporting the project and others opposing it. There was no on-going discussion among them and there was no agreement on the reasons for the conflict and the failure to discuss it.

At the end the demand of the project opponents for the socialization of the project, the interest of the Municipality and Vice-ministry for executing it and the interest of its supporters to avoid big changes in the project, made all these groups accept the implementation of the TT.

Ex-ante evaluation

The moment to organize the TT was opportune. The atmosphere had calmed down 6 months after the conflicts of 2003, the Mayor who arrived in 2004 was more open to discussion and the Vice-Ministry supported the TT. However some stakeholder groups would boycott the process and do not accept its legitimacy. Due to it much time was devoted to obtain the stakeholders' support to the process.

The legitimacy of the Facilitator (Negowat) was based on their long time working in the area and the support of the Vice-ministry. Negowat decided to appear as neutral not making any proposal on the project itself.

Design of the TT

A proposal for TT implementation was discussed with representatives of all stakeholders mainly in order to know under which conditions they would accept to participate.

Six points can be stressed about the design of this platform.

- 1) Negowat played the role of Facilitator, with Tiquipaya Municipality and the Vice-Ministry as formal inviting organizations.
- 2) The official objective of the TT was to: 1) create a space for socialization, analysis and discussion of MACOTI project and 2) propose motions to improve it. Additionally its recommendations should be implemented by the municipality and its implementation should not stop the execution of MACOTI project.
- 3) The TT was focused on the discussion of MACOTI project with stakeholders of Tiquipaya. The themes of discussion were the technical design, the financial one and the future institutional model, in that order. The agreements were reached by consensus rule.
- 4) Most of the stakeholders were represented by their leaders and anybody could come and participate in the discussion; at the end this flexibility did not harm the negotiation process.
- 5) The communication between the TT and the public was through information bulletins. These were distributed to all the stakeholders in Tiquipaya. Several newspapers and local television channels were invited to attend, but they did not come.
- 6) At first, four sessions of two days each were planned but in the end five sessions were executed. No specific capacity-building meetings were organized. A summary of the MACOTI project was elaborated and the participants often asked for more detailed information during sessions.

A set of rules for debating was applied in order to make sure that debate would remain calm and participants would respect each other.

Monitoring and evaluation

The results of the evaluation are based on indicators defined in function of the objectives of the TT and the actions of the Facilitator.

The accomplishment of the general objective can be explained in relation to:

Socialization of the project. Though was not possible to make in-depth changes in the technical and financial aspects, the participants were able to distinguish the positive and negative aspects of the project.

An indirect achievement was the improvement of the relationship among the stakeholders with contrary positions. They accepted to sit together and argue about the MACOTI project without reaching a conflict.

Propose changes to improve the project. It was difficult to introduce changes in a project already at the beginning of its implementation. With exception of the institutional part, very few changes were proposed.

The TT established a common view about the institutional model for the organization that will manage the system in Tiquipaya.

Conclusions and recommendations:

Some lessons learned from the process are:

It was important to maintain the structure of the platform flexible. The facilitator put a lot of effort to define the number and appointment of representatives, but at the end it was more useful to manage it openly.

It was necessary to verify the carried out stakeholders' mapping with the stakeholders themselves. One important stakeholder was ignored in the beginning.

The consideration of reimbursement of the costs of participation of representatives in the TT would have enhanced the regularity of their attendance.

The opposition showed by some groups to the involvement of important stakeholders and the difficulties of the participants to focus their opinions around the issues discussed manifested their lack of culture to deal with conflicts within platforms.

The TT implementation shows the potential of this kind of processes to solve differences about specific issues. The carry out of a platform during the design stage of MACOTI project would have avoided the conflicts around it.

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